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IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

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LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A first type one node for grooming low capacity client
2 signals into a high capacity signal, comprising:
3 an a first interface to a first high capacity trunk for directly coupling to a second
4 type one node; and
5 ~~an~~ a second interface to a second high capacity trunk for directly coupling to a
6 type two node;
7 wherein only a portion of those low capacity client signals destined for the second
8 type one node are groomed into the second high capacity trunk to the type two node.

2. (Cancelled)

1 3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the type two node is a
2 high traffic node.

1 4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second type one node
2 is ~~[[a]]~~ an enhanced cable station and the type two node is a central office.

1 5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the low capacity client
2 signals comprise plesiochronous digital hierarchy signals and the high capacity signal
3 comprises a synchronous transport module signal.

1 6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for performing selective grooming of client
2 signals, the apparatus comprising:
3 a first type one node coupled (a) directly to a ~~first~~ second type one node via a first
4 interface to a first high capacity trunk, and (b) directly to a ~~second~~ type two node via a

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5 second interface to a second high capacity trunk, such that only a portion of the client
6 signals destined for the ~~first~~ second type one node are groomed into the ~~high~~ second high
7 capacity trunk to the ~~second~~ type two node.

7. (Cancelled)

1 8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the ~~first~~ second type one
2 node is a low traffic node and the ~~second~~ type two node is a high traffic node.

1 9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the ~~first~~ second type one
2 node is ~~[[a]]~~ an enhanced cable station and the ~~second~~ type two node is a central office.

1 10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the client signals
2 comprise plesiochronous digital hierarchy signals and the ~~first~~ high capacity trunk ~~and the~~
3 second high capacity trunk each supports support a synchronous transport module signal.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

1 14. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a first type one node, the method
2 comprising the steps of:
3 receiving low capacity client signals;
4 selectively grooming a portion of the received low capacity client signals into a
5 first high capacity trunk directly coupled to a ~~first type of~~ second type one node for
6 transmission to the ~~first type of~~ second type one node; and
7 transmitting others of the low capacity client signals over a second high capacity
8 trunk directly coupled to a ~~second type of~~ type two node;

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9 wherein said others of the low capacity signals transmitted over the second high
10 capacity trunk comprise low capacity client signals destined for the ~~first type of~~ second
11 type one node.

1 15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the low capacity client
2 ~~signals~~ signals comprise plesiochronous digital hierarchy signals, and the first high
3 capacity trunk and the second high capacity trunk ~~supports each support~~ a synchronous
4 transport module signal.

16. (Cancelled)

1 17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the ~~second type of~~ second
2 type one node is ~~[[a]] an enhanced~~ cable station and the ~~first type of~~ type two node is a
3 central office.

1 18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the ~~second type of~~ second
2 type one node is a low traffic node and the ~~first type of~~ type two node is a high traffic
3 node.

1 19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein grooming of the portion
2 of those low capacity client signals destined for said second type one node into the
3 second high capacity trunk to said type two node further comprises:
4 determining an aggregate amount of traffic between ~~another~~ said first type one
5 node and said second type one node;
6 determining whether said aggregate amount of traffic between said ~~another~~ first
7 type one node and said second type one node exceeds a predetermined threshold, said
8 predetermined threshold comprising a fraction of a capacity of said first high capacity
9 trunk directly coupling said first type one node and said second type one node; and
10 if said aggregate amount of traffic between said first type one node and said
11 ~~another~~ second type one node does not exceed said predetermined threshold, routing said

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- 12 amount of traffic from said first type one node over said second high capacity trunk to
13 said second type two node; or
14 if said amount of traffic between said first type one node and said second type one
15 node exceeds said predetermined threshold, provisioning at least one additional high
16 capacity trunk between said first type one node and said second type one node.

20. (Cancelled)